

REMARKS

This Amendment seeks to place this application in condition for allowance. All of the Examiner's rejections have been addressed. Some of the pending claims have been amended to improve clarity and/or antecedence. Dependent claims 195-199 have been added. No new matter has been added.

OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action dated May 22, 2003 (hereinafter, "the OFFICE ACTION"), certain claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In addition certain claims were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in view of certain claims of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,038,195, 6,452,863 B2, and 6,324,120. Finally, specific claims were rejected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. These rejections are addressed below.

35 U.S.C. 112 Second Paragraph Rejection

In the OFFICE ACTION, claims 162, 163, 172, 173, 177, and 194 were rejected based on lack of positive antecedent basis. Applicants have amended these claims to address the Examiner's concern. Applicants thank the Examiner for pointing out those instances where antecedence could be improved.

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Obviousness-type Double Patenting Rejection

In the OFFICE ACTION, certain claims of this application were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting in view of specific claims of U.S. patent nos. 6,038,195, 6,452,863B2, and 6,324,120. While Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection, in an effort to expedite the prosecution of the instant application, Applicants submit herewith 3 (three) Terminal Disclaimers executed by the agent of record in this application. These Terminal Disclaimers are submitted to obviate the aforementioned double patenting rejection(s). It is believed that these Terminal Disclaimers comply fully with the relevant parts of 37 CFR §1.321.

Information Disclosure Statement

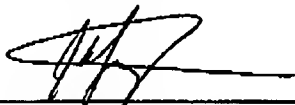
An Information Disclosure Statement, a (modified) citation Form PTO-1449, and a copy of each of the documents listed therein are being submitted. It is believed that the Examiner may find these documents material to the patentability of one or more of the claims in the instant application. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner make his consideration formally of record with the next Action. For the convenience of the Examiner, copies of both the Information Disclosure Statement and citation form PTO-1449 are attached hereto.

Conclusion

Applicants request reconsideration of the instant application in view of the Information Disclosure Statement, foregoing remarks and amendments. Applicants submit that the pending claims present patentable subject matter. Accordingly, allowance of all of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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